



DELUSIVE ARTIFICE

THE LETTERS FROM ROCHEFORT

BY MELCHIOR WEISS

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OR
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AN EPISTOLARY NOVEL BY
MELCHIOR WEISS

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FIRST LETTER

Cédric to Leonard

Château de Rochefort, 18 October 1745

Pity! utterly damned! Friend, I weep of our times in beautiful Nantes; o the cruel memories, is a damn to be given? What conjecture do you suppose of my misfortune? Alas! trifle not you would in my dynamic affairs; thou shall merely sup in more necessary events, wouldn't you agree? My days here shall not be in vain; damn well thou expects my industries to bear significance thus I shall not relinquish the vigor which of I have; indeed, friend, a marvelous conjecture to conceive!

The warden of this establishment, the Duc Fourès, seems solely wanton regarding his intentions: the scoundrel fears not of his motions and the misfortune resulting from their vitality. Friend! he is the vicious of them all; I worry of one acting upon impulse and consequently the avarice of the debauched man triumphing your weak twigs; the bastard, from my conjectures, seems mightily acquainted with the President Sadoul which leads me to surmise he is no good; please, be wary of him.

The past week afore this letter was quite impeccable with respect to crimes ever so wretched; one will never fathom the misfortune my fellow bodies and I endured at the grips of that bastard; all I can say is, simply, caprice is his prime precept whereby he strays not from the heart; virtue is renounced with the succession as vice as his leading notion; I attribute this fact to his enchanting physique. Dear friend, what an utter monster released upon man, purportedly, for his suffering; all days are brimmed with sheer carnality—the senses stripped to merely ones of animals—wholly debauched by his handsome yet cruel visage, sinew stature of 190 centimeters, grizzly teeth, and coarse breath which of resembled an unclean buttock. The Duc seems fain with vanity by his capricious intemperance virtually

through his continuous smile; moreover, friend, his errors were something to admire; such sin within them! nearly as penetrating as Nature's enticement.

Today befell splendid ventures albeit it was to my torment yet, nonetheless, all held unrest towards the cruelty allowing the Duc to send us to our antechambers right after dinner; the customary, spoiled porridge was given to us. Alas, friend, thou wants to hear of the suppers. Your lust nevermore renounces amusement; thus, I shall begin with how the week after sending my preceding letter launched: the Duc rose everyone precisely the hour of sunrise not with deviation; beds were to be made to the best of one's abilities; all were to align symmetrically, parallel to the other, pointing towards the antechamber door. My cellmate, Nicolas, was a dunce thinking, by all, he could outwit the Duc through the method of using a timber-carved bayonet, he solely designed, in an effort to reap the joys of the bastard's death. I wouldn't lie saying I, too, wished for the same; yet, the Duc has been an adroit man where ill-thought, meager ploys from the likes of the unprincipled Nicolas, most easily, could be plundered into bankruptcy.

Doubtlessly, friend, he was swelled with courage; one could say it was innocuous yet the sole manner liberty would be granted thus I trusted his motions but it was a coquet; the audacious man, saturated with pride, swung his timber apparatus the moment the Duc arrived at our antechamber wherethrough, before he could penetrate the membrane of him, the Duc effortlessly gleaned the timber arm and forced it into the front of his neck; furthermore, the Duc made all efforts to paint Nicolas a conceited man via soiling his infirm ego. O friend! what savagery he has; manners, principles, and the like were omitted in favour of irreverence and indignity as the harbingers of his coaxes; the designs assembled solely for his usage, dear friend, were most cruel and exceedingly imperious alike to the Egyptians upon the Semites.

Tributes were ceded not after Nicolas's unforeseen passing; repenting was to be punished pitiably hence the other prisoners rested tranquil and compliant; the Duc was the one who governed our beings and through this very principle our nature was solely up to his wits whereby he requited; ah! what cruelty!

Breakfast was served in a timely manner just after the expiration of Nicolas. Ravaged, spoiled porridge accompanied with vintage, utterly provocative water, naught with purity, was what we were annexed; the unmitigated mutant we were

apportioned was by the head chef of the prison, Ludovic, who, too, was a prisoner, here for raping twenty women ages 18 to 60 in the duration of two months... a marvelous and striking feat it was, friend! By what virtue is he the chef, one may ask? Purely for a bidding he arranged with the Duc: his sentence would be reduced at the expense of serving the establishment until his sentence, now reduced, expired; his curriculum vitae would be annulled additionally at the expense of having to reside in seclusion at all times except for preparing meals and assisting the Duc with his affairs.

Succeeding breakfast, we were arrayed about the main quarters where our antechambers rested; the corner-most position is where we were to place ourselves according to one of the Duc's guards; all of us were in a state of astringent unrest sensing that hospitality deviated from the norm far too coarsely; friend! we wept tears of fright and agitation and nevermore could we be fain again.

"Friends, greetings!," announced the Duc. "I sincerely repent for any inconvenience accrued throughout the morning; understand that, as prisoners, one must abide by our rulings otherwise ramifications shall be foisted. We are no deficient company nor nowise considerate; the likes of such leniency are aught but to be attended. Oh! neither of you wholly bodies fathom this privilege endowed to us; Christ perches in Hell all the while Scylla yields to her errors; what more could one ask for? Alas! your reasoning for your stay on the platform is merely the exposing of our ruthless crimes whereby castigation shall be foreseen; abet arduous passions of your fashion; piteous pretension bear not; procrastinating the errors that lie burdened on your notions will stipulate avarice solely upon you, the prisoners! What does this lead to? What conjectures are to be sought? Answers, friends, culminate into misfortune and it is this misfortune that one is stipulated by our designs. One shall now apprehend the implication of my words."

"Alas! your attire is to be stripped precisely succeeding whatever our heads thirst for; the guards and I shall perform thorough examinations wherethrough expectant the governing bodies of your dignities are to your ruination; the guards and I shall perform thorough examinations wherethrough expectant the governing bodies of your dignities are to your ruination; such passion! such sin! Could one or something ever rival this dereliction? Erupt so zealously upon the heavens, reap its rewards, and salute us later for what we foretold," cried the Duc. "By the same

token, gentlemen, when apparel is extracted and all lie parallel to the other, I shall ship the head guard, Monsieur de Lacoste, for reasons of our foreday probes of the physique to make assured no persons are carrying illicit items with them; thereafter, Monsieur de Lacoste shall dispatch your new regalia; in the eleventh hour, Bibles will be distributed then all will be sent to their antechambers till the hour of lunch lands, any questions?" The primary quarters reigned restrained following the Duc's pronouncements and the other prisoners seemed to be atypically accustomed to the Duc's hideous mannerisms; the bastard brandished his yellow, corroding teeth withal led his tracks by a colossal bulge; fuck! was abominable, impending, and inexplicably entrancing apace with being brilliantly fiend; my! held no decency. Ultimately, we capitulated. Friend!... was such a tragedy!

We ceded our tributes to the man amassing the books of Christ and displacing them unto our pockets amid the inspection by Monsieur de Lacoste who, too, reaped scripture then strode out of the main quarters, allegedly, to retire for the time being. Monsieur de Lacoste, by the time we all carried scripture, posted us to our antechambers without further dialogue however my tracks were suspended by the Duc. Evidently, he wished to speak of my new cellmate: "Monsieur de Beaumont, I have intelligence to impart upon you in regard to your new cellmate; he's old yet handsome for his age, remarkably adroit and stunning more than any man I've had my eyes on before; your fears shall be spurn! Dear friend, what comes of fear exactly?—Nothing!"

My cellmate and I stayed in complete silence with merely energies and wills exchanging when our mouths oscillated despite the meagerness; requiting the Duc's assertions, indeed he was amply versed in stimulating studies extending from philosophy and physics to linguistics; too he bore a pertinent disdain for religion and their sheep whereof it is something, as you know, I'm far too fond of nearly as horrid as Herodias: she is a suitor of misfortune and wishes to peck its lips lest they harm her nowise.

The old man seemed fixated on his literature—*Don Quixote*, *Arabian Nights*, and Dante's *Inferno*—scanning the rims and the roofs; I, too, borrowed his literature through his charitable offers and lauded the amiable soul by donating him one of my pieces of literature: *Antigone*. The old man shrieked until his frail respiratory systems ruptured in order to commend my largesse: "Oh! I thank you more than

ever! Your charity implies that one derives delight in the designs of misfortune; it is straightforward to spot one who merely brings in for himself not to benefit anybody, thus which fate gifts is solely for intentions sought—"

"Yes! ah yes, friend! all logic lies in that mere fact; I credit thy lustrous deductions which by govern you do. Friend, is true that misfortune comes from the prowess one carries; your thirst for it triumphs the likes of my own; what a paramount achievement! If must, one shall see naught of my victories," I cried; "furthermore, for after witnessing brilliance expounded just then, I am merely substance void of its former, lavish valor. No Holy Spirit ever could welcome repenting upon my downfall thus I weep of such melancholy." The old man, in succession without demur, took to my words by considering their errors: "Young man, your weep, your cower, and your sup gain no momentum on the domain outside of your own; all weep but, ultimately, all is naught and naught can be fixed; that is far more cruel than which my words caress yours; lest one devours the despair rather than accept it, one will glean her charities, dear friend... fear, which of is evidently present on your face, is the devil's advocate: either it can court pity or court the path to pride which is perhaps not horrid, perhaps not sublime; what suffices and sprouts is, simply, enticement in conjunction with pride for it is our nirvana; which one of the courts of fear lies unbound is merely a chimera and is considered mere substance upon her strokes!"

The Duc, in the interim, ebbed from retirement at the hour of evening and spoke of our following commandments: "Gentlemen, the hour has come whereof dinner then rest shall proceed at the hands of we, your officers. I'm assured Ludovic will prepare a polished meal for all and suffice your rapacious appetites; long-expired animal carcasses shall suffice; it is an overture by my company and I merely to indulge in the nectar misfortunes exudates upon the soil. At the hour of meals, at last, being gripped to your esophagi, all will be shipped to their antechambers to rest for the next day; by virtue of this, we, the tyrannical company, shall prevail sufficed with our animal spirits by such despotism else indeed one shall foresee the lips of misfortune caressing their disparaged spirits, understood?" "Yes, Monsieur!," shouted we successively to his words.

Dinner was prepared by Ludovic and the other chefs a few hours later not with error. Again! spoiled porridge was served with an addition of toilet wine—

which was essentially blood mixed with toilet water—to suffice our thirst. Most were jubilant of the lauds dinner brought and the cynics still ate their meals; alas, discourse was fairly limited by the stroke of the Duc’s seducing demeanor.

Meals were finished merely ten minutes after our affairs; the Duc and the other guards, with the inclusion of Monsieur de Lacoste, had their focal point upon our engineered departures amid satiating in our alluring shades at the hour of 21:00. The old man and a young, charismatic guard, Monsieur de Truong, who entertained us, throughout our stroll, with stunning wit indeed the old man couldn’t rival. Just then, we arrived at our cell, bid our farewells, and collapsed to our beds merely thereafter accompanied by subtle chirps lying the sole reverberation in latency.

Alas, my friend! My letters are cries, cries of help, your help, for need it I do in regards to this cruel circumstance; one must fathom how brutish my times here remain albeit the company of the old man soothes my wounds. Do what one must, dear friend, and, please, write to me again for I cherish these modest moments we experience through this thus continuation of such charity must be sought!

SECOND LETTER

Leonard to Cédric

Marseilles, 20 October

Oh friend! never have I been aware of what cruelty you were undergoing; I shun my ignorance and utter fancies by which led me to misfortune; not being able to write in these desperate times; indeed, you said it justly: "Utterly damned!..." whereby one can only pity my actions, wouldn't you agree? Alas, thus far, I presume thy residence there has merely boasted your dissension; one simply fancies such logic through the slimmest of measurements albeit accuracy would be in a few cases; I call for you, friend, to not let go of our ambitions and continue with thy motions simply if one considers their ego first,... don't let any sway your motions!

I met with your attorney yesterday evening, Alceste Blanchet, who acquainted me with the details of the Sadoul case. Who knew your attorney was apart of the Blanchet family! Friend! they are outstanding teachers of the law and fathoming its designs so worry not of Monsieur Blanchet in defecting your case,... I won't let it happen! Alas, he seemed quite promising thus our dynamics sprouted evidently by his intriguing conclusions yet, friend, it still lies a mystery coaxing the surface of Monsieur Blanchet's brilliant deductions. Is this what it leads to?

Monsieur Blanchet assuaged my fears and answered all my inquiries which ultimately pleased my aspirations regarding your sovereignty; anon, dear friend, thou will sip the nectar of liberation coming to appreciate the grace that comes from doing so, I know it!

My wife gave birth to a beautiful, young daughter, Claudine, just a few days ago, who lightens the dark shades of this world; I'd esteem thy honour of meeting her one day when all this has passed.... I surmise she'll welcome your company lest she nowise wishes, which I hardly forecast; I want to rear her to be a pleasant, young girl who illuminates the thorns housing felicity and causing it misfortune;

indeed, her spirits are ones to sip; I conjecture you'll come to value the goblet of divinity that is my daughter.

The relationship my wife and I have has rested fairly lasting and consistent other than seldom disputes of which usually culminate to naught other than bitter cries. She and I are taking unrivaled care of her, and we hope she comes to warm up to our latency somewhat; alas, my wife and I don't seem to dredge into discourse too often than not lest our impulses say otherwise.

Farewell, friend! I realize how cruel this fate is and it makes me weep all the more frequent with merely our connection being writing and the wounds we caress; misfortune seems to bind our every fate to differing degrees but, in all, nevermore can we seem to escape its thirst. Sip my words and relinquish the idleness but savor the nectar, dear friend. I bid you the best of luck and, very well, I shall write more to you to assuage your pains.

THIRD LETTER

Cédric to Leonard

Château de Rochefort, 21 October

Your utterances lighten the dark shades of Providence, dear friend; none can argue that! Fiend as ever such vanity remain apprised by her hand. Splendor apiece! My errors shouldn't burden thy motions for what would manifest other than sheer pity by the other party? My mornings would leave me tired, my afternoons would leave me passive, my evenings would leave me idle, and my nights would leave me demented. What would one see by leading their respected friend to that misfortune? Damned! that is merely what one would need to suit; I know you're not like that. You've heard it, friend, but I wish to say it again: my life is the embodiment of misfortune; to Nature, I am merely, to her, a stroke from her brush; substance which by I bind to her wisp; what else could one be?... Don't suppose the notion that I am endowed a seraph to protect my interests; we all Fathom where such thinking leads to.... Alas, my remarks lead somewhere—my life. Oh you've seen what it has done to me!... It's been years but surely coaxes my consciousness to any avail sought by shrewd parties unto my eventual ceasing either by death or by libel; no matter, all crowds my hellish head through cruel measures but I find that my errors routinely triumph those blights as the times pass.

THE STORY OF CÉDRIC

I've recounted my past beforehand at our stay in Nantes during the summer of 1740 thus I will be straightforward: I was born into the lush Beaumont family by the effete Monsieur de Beaumont and the urbane Madame de Beaumont, formerly Madame Delsarte; life in the Beaumont household was, on the whole, airish in spirit, kept trim by the valets—Guillaume and Vincent—and kept with our hungers surfeited by the chefs—Gauthier, Josselin, and Philippe; I was a single child to the

Monsieur and the Madame residing on the bashful highlands of Marseilles in the castle Château de Benoît, built in the 14th century so it very well held senectitude in our saccharine hearts in such a manner it provoked immediate immersion. My father was employed as a financier for our family-run banking firm while my mother took attention to my needs; soon thereafter, she departed six years following my birth abandoning both my father and I merely in search of piety; a convent came her acquaintance then swept her from the château thereby burdening my father and I with the thought of such grace purloined till death do us part; oh, it was cruel, friend!

Life thereon imparted me opportunities to no end in sight; my father brought over a company of mistresses on an incessant occurrence; his favoured one, Madame Strauss, worked for my father's company whereupon I consistently experienced the two intermingling and caressing their brisk lips as if they've hadn't felt the nectar of lust in ages; eventually, the two married when I was 10 and the Madame birthed another child to accompany my solitude: Marian. He was an opportunistic bastard. Dear God! I unconditionally scorned him for the mutant he was and forever grieved of the misfortune he put me through apace with my sire and salacious step-mother; I reckon he was a benefactor of my imprisonment, dear friend but the displeasure of the past has assuaged to my fortuity so he remains merely a stain in my mind.

By the time I finished my studies when I was 16, my father arranged to employ me for his establishment foreseeing me to chaperon its operations after his passing; I modestly dismissed his bid in favour of serving in the platoons—I wasn't prepared for what was to come... the misfortune that would befall upon me, the woman that would strip me of humanity. O it is all to weep ceaselessly about!

On arrival to the site, located on the outskirts of Paris, our pricks were measured meticulously by the commandants who relayed the precise measurements to a company of ostentatious doctors and parted ways, by carriage, once my platoon and I were outside the interior; thereafter, one of the commandants positioned us chronologically in a distinct fashion similar to a linear arrangement: the younger men led the line, the older men led behind them, the younger women followed, and the older women tailed behind; the younger men were categorized, in rows of four and columns of precisely four, with the far-most left side lying the man

with the smallest prick up to the end of the far-most right side which lied the man with the largest prick; this was reciprocated for the older men too and the women with regards to the size of their bosoms; forthwith, the front-men and women were all massacred by one of the commandants and had their corpses dumped in a nearby river whereas the far-most row of the men and women were preserved solely for the appeasements of the commandants; they were then transported, by another carriage, to another site crowded with colonels, lieutenant-colonels and other commandants. It was sunset at this very hour when we were restrained of our burdens albeit at the expense of further, assuredly far worse, subjugation by the scoundrels.

My words, friend, were justly affirmed when one of the Colonels at the site, Colonel Marandon, apportioned us wilted grass as our meals. He was a rancorous man with an unyielding appetite for what came of one through the usage of misfortune and adhered to this precept time and time again whenever the convenience arose; the other colonels apprised our enfeebled selves more or less chivalrously contrasting Colonel Marandon's caustic reception; this led me to deduce the fact that the men were governed by the hand of Colonel Marandon where, from my conjectures, supposed, to me, the notion the men were merely putting on an act.

Repast was all the more displeasing when Colonel Marandon acquainted my platoon and I with what to foresee from his errors; we learned tremendously about the Colonel throughout his dialogue which led me to marvel at him to extents far above my preconceptions. Beside me perched a young woman, Arlette Belcourt, who would be the one to sketch my misfortune and what it would bring; at heart, an apprising soul brimmed solely of artistry and class; in all, a refined sight! My eyes seemed to nevermore leave the post of beholding her physique all throughout the Colonel's dialogue. I never learned of the man's past thus, friend, we are spurned of such knowledge but what concerns were sought when dear Arlette was next to me?

The first few weeks at the site were laborious for my brittle soul but all the more opportune for I was abreast forthwith of the errors men bear and spent my recesses with Arlette allowing me to become more enlightened of the beguiling spirit; oh, god! she enlivened my weeps of melancholy which of had grip of my being and imprisoned me immeasurably to cruel lengths, but a sight of sin was felt for she

was too utopian and pious for a woman; I felt that she carried burdens too, friend, like any would but that was left out of the picture; yet more, I sought conclusions but to no avail! She was a shrewd woman or she was the first of Nature's inventions that bore no errors; I reckoned, foolishly, that the former was the conclusion to my conjectures rather than the latter being I thought naught of the enigma.

Colonel Marandon, the weeks after my supposition, shipped my platoon and I to Egypt for the sole intent as to reap the resources of a remote village, known to the inhabitants as Amenemhat; our platoon presently had 80 members which was sufficient, for the mission, to merely dispatch 30 of us including Arlette and I. From my understanding, the intention of this enterprise was due to an ongoing monopoly France was having at the time thus, to uphold it, French platoons were routinely shipped to remote African villages for the sole reason of plundering their assets being that these villages were thought naught of in the process and no meaningful relations would be lost; ideally, a small platoon was employed for the task, so fewer numbers were lost and the assets, ultimately, would be obtained.

Amid our plundering, I confronted a family of four pleading for their lives: one, the wife, going as far to offer her body; my emotions overtook me nearly whereto I wished to cry but it was abortive in the conclusion when dear Arlette shot the four without demur and overlooked my inattention to accomplish my duties; thereafter, Arlette took all the four had in their possession then successively advanced to the next person in sight whom beheld terror of unheard-of measures; alas, I could do naught but stand afront the scene and inspire thy tears of despondency upon the parchment thou holds at this time.

We were sent back to the site merely three days succeeding our incursion with a capital in the infinities; Colonel Marandon flattered our achievements with burgundy from Rennes complimenting each of our respective feats; Arlette's were most lauded out of the rest of the platoon for what knowing they had of her avarice! Inevitably, mine were welcomed then left to be not ever to be talked about again; nonetheless, the burgundy and succeeding repast was all I truly wished for and sufficed enough of; ultimately, friend, struggle is what stimulates us and brings us joy; contrary to what it supposes.

Weekly, our shippings were scheduled for Amenemhat whereuntil we wholly reaped their rewards to satisfy royalty; oh Christ! remember one can of the trea-

sure one cosseted in from the commiserative village; they didn't put up a fight; how cowardly of them! Colonel Marandon, accordingly, followed up with another design wherein lied truths yet to be sifted; the Moroccan village of Souhaila was to be our next stop; meanwhile, the relationship I had with Arlette remained fairly distant from what chimera previously felt lied; she had her occupation more on the sight of seeing another at the hand of misfortune that men could be any less than a mere nuisance in piquing her insistent heart; nevermore the heart could be swayed from this post thus one can merely accept such truth; indeed, friend, was the utmost of cruelties flooded upon me.

A few days later culminated in our dispatching to the outlying village of Souhaila which, to us, was somewhat the enigma; the residents were known to never sway from their hearts and fought with admirable courage that considerably rivaled our own; we needed 70 men for the mission, and we knew that a fair quantity of us was going to be apprised by the Reaper's hands; even dear Arlette held not her conventional hubris but could merely cast light upon her vulnerable, submissive side. Alas, she truly was a woman at heart.

Wherein mere men stood afront the lines of Souhaila, one reckoned only incest, adultery, sodomy, murder would transpire; what rightfully so one would be! The Colonel accompanied us this time and fought all which he could expend to secure our victory; too, I did the like apace with my darling, Arlette. The villagers were damned to be courageous by the time we broke through their front-lines for merely we could sup therein the worst of crimes, all which of aspire our scrutiny; the binds which held us were broken, all commandments written by Moses were omitted, and our high prowess was apprised above all in the process.

I fornicated devotedly with a loving woman whose lack of a husband, merely a man who sat thereon with disturbance upon his visage, captured me excessive rewards within my heart and I left our enterprise to continue whereuntil the others finished theirs. Arlette, amid my feats, disemboweled a three month old child belonging to the leader of the village, Hamza, who all could but merely be confounded by the sight during the time the other of my fellow infantries kindled all houses, disemboweled the wives and youths, and fought cohesive clashes with the husbands unto one triumphed the other. Arlette then treasured the precious organs that would bring in capital for France and threw the remains to Hamza with

such flippancy one merely made spirited of our triumph.... Alas! Nature cultivated our manners wherein our decencies were shun their respective light upon, their shade were enlightened to the residents and inclinations the platoon and I withheld flooded us through the manner of willed defiance, whereby one not serve her wishes?

Friend, there was a sole acumen to reaping the organs of our beloved victims; what more could one ask for than to revolt the designs that govern complacency by none other than securing further assets? Indulging in greater pleasures? Pursuing higher crime?... Agitating former notions bound by sheer ignorance was our goal which by was sought to no end; if we had to flout Providence in the act, then so be it! The three month old child of Hamza's proved to be profoundly vendible, friend; her organs were virtuous to our clientele for the fact that she had naught but the slightest of crime within her vessel; a gift by Nature I suppose. Therein, our friends conceded to our hospitable bargain and paid us liberally around 5000 francs each per our efforts; subsequently, the Colonel enacted an exemplary repast requiting us with cooked beef burgundy, pork rillettes, and in all likelihood the finest Champagne I've yet ever to taste.

I wished to talk to Arlette throughout our feast and so I did. Her physiognomy was meritorious!—dashing red hair, permeating moles just upon her neck, aciculate eyebrows, dazzling eyelashes, and seducing lips which of I came quite fond of thereafter; conversations with her were seldom yet utterly enrapturing from where we discussed literature to the current politics of France and more; philosophy was unfortunately not her strong suit, however, with her sharp eye, she caught on to what I was saying fairly effortlessly; our foremost colloquy on philosophy, which started just after the feast, was the most indelible:

Cédric: O tell me, Madame, what is it that you want in life? Certainly, what is it? Life is an enigma crafted solely to have us bodies suffer throughout its process; we face its errors by espousing our own, but what good does it suffice when we merely experience misfortune but have not to pursue with it?

Arlette: Life is an enigma indeed, friend, but what to me accepts such fantasy that we must find its answers. Does it benefit anyone beknown to the fact of what it holds? Yes, one can suppose that such wist appeases misfortune but to what avail?

To what ends must one go to even consider the thought, why even to begin with?

Cédric: Answers and appeasement are all which govern us, friend. We are the victim of her designs and must learn to not yield upon them as if we were her serfs but merely as if we welcomed her hostility through a manner which prompts agitation upon us unto flattering the whims we bear; organisms of all sort are bound by this too. This leads us to the fact that Christ, the being we, as humans, are anticipated to regard as our savior and granter of virtue, is but a burden to not only us but to Nature likewise; the motions sought after are not in favour of Nature's strokes and her errors are shunned with her designs dismantled to naught—it is akin to a shameless crucifixion for her and she weeps dearly of it! What does Christ do in this circumstance?—Nothing!

My fault, friend, but that is all my mind can remember yet don't consider our colloquy was merely on the surface; she knew far more than my words can put into fruition! Four years thereafter, I was discharged from the platoon, shipped back to my home in Marseilles, and was welcomed by the sight of trembling misfortune. "Oh!," I cried, "what led to such precipitation?" Before me was an utterly ruined sight: the château once settled upon the beautiful mountains now was mere ashes with not a trace of any of my household; oh, my friend! nevermore misfortune, in my mind, bear such horror. All to me was an enigma at that point and I renounced my former notions in place of what Nature now was to bid me next, whatever she was to please.

I stop here. My story merely ends by the fact of my questioning; I'm not withholding conjectures nor answers, friend,... perturb yourself not of the burden! My kinship with thee lies stronger than the twigs any tree could aspire to carry; whether be it may thou kill me where I stand or welcome my errors, naught erects upon our path of friendship! Pride, dear friend, that's what should govern the heart at times like these. My plight is hell for have I not liberty in this antechamber crowded by scoundrels, who hold not my heart in their minds, about the rims of the interior whereof I inhere; friend! I shall consider it cruel for me to be deprived of control for incentives unfortold; it's utterly inane! Nevertheless, does one like me let notions of not ever visiting you again take a ruling over me? Without a doubt, nowise!—we will unite one day, friend, and when that day comes, I will

flatter what poise you have. I devoir not any more than that!

FOURTH LETTER

Alceste to Cédric

Paris, 21 October

I spoke with your friend, Monsieur de Verley, just two days ago upon the evening hour in Paris; it strikingly comes delicate at these hours by how the sun eclipses the horizon and Nature wisps soundly. All is beautiful in Paris, friend! He inquired about the details in a manner best distinguished as intransigent; wistfully, I haven't come to any noteworthy conclusions so far. It's becoming fairly rebarbative, and I have more patrons yet to be attended however I am intensely impassioned of your case and wish for your freeing as much as thou do; alas! consume naught of perturb and aspire for what bring forth we shall to thee.

I intend to study the Sadoul records if be it the pervasive Sadoul administration consents upon such action which I hold my doubts but as seem it may, a man akin to me has no fleeting thought of acquiescence above all assenting to the ones who incarcerated my beloved patron; thou is stupendous in discourse and evidently carries winsome flair. Cruel would be for one to quell an appetite parallel to a varmint's which of kens no bounds... very well! the indecency of your inclinations is not to be overlooked; henceforth, conscientiousness forthwith it goes to apexes foresought by thou knowing adeptly what it brings.

Sleep has been the last of my priorities, all the while, your mephitic case has yet to glean its respective assiduity from none other than merely your dear friend and I; truthfully, by the heart, one can do not but weep ceaselessly, but I won't let such contact the dominion which by I govern for naught would bring in imperative developments other than the excretion of utter entropy which then is simply out of our reaching. We mustn't let it arrest our agitation lest none other sensation can be sought after.

I'll find time to contact the Duc too but he's routinely buried in his work that I have not the most meager of time to seek his invitation yet I will say that

your friend's conjecture on him coordinating with the Sadoul administration may not be an enigma in the consummation, but these mere suppositions may be idle endeavors leading us to flawed conclusions. Who in fact knows! But friend, don't let it get the better of you; continue vindicating your courage and betimes we will sight the answers we incline to unravel by time ones mind is suited in a more pleasant state.

FIFTH LETTER

Leonard to Cédric

Marseilles, 22 October

Shame! my ignorance yet more cossets the relentless prejudices which pervade my mind but of spirit that drives my being to succor for thee to attain mightier apexes; alas! I'm a deficiency serving naught but idle noise in the background of unmitigated misfortune, friend... my most sincere of apologies uttered from my lips or through my pen could not suffice the riven heart; nonetheless, I aspire to renounce the past errors and strive for what now lies upon us considering your experiences thereof so upon us lies answers yet to be sought... we have far more to trail yet again we remain standing at the discourteous counter of misfortune by which mere wills are sought to be shivered and all, hereafter, will be forfeited... don't fall victim to temptation, dear friend, lest it serves to avail your whims!

Claudine and the other half are doing well; just today, dear Claudine wept not a tear when her mother left her to her own to attend chores... she seemed stoic but nevertheless contented of the circumstance; I see her being a valiant, young woman swelled with strong will and gallantry vagrant from revolting vapors. Her eyes, dear friend, my! they too are commendable in every sense of the word; their shade lightens my aphotic chambers whereby I perch writing to thee upon this momentous occasion and shun enmity to no end... in all beauty at first sight! She's no dolt either: she can already speak her first words howbeit they are by no means sensible yet they reap my wife and I felicity nevermore experienced hitherto other than what lies behind our boudoir, which hardly compares to the felicity our daughter subsidizes to us on an everyday basis.

I ask, how are they treating you? Pitilessly? Cruelly? Somewhat courteously? The warden seems reprehensibly virulent merely from letters I've written to him a few weeks following your confinement, and he spewed noxious portents now that have me leery of the man. Oh heavens! he was utterly shameless. What a scoundrel!

Aside from his invidious words, yet I have to see an issue with him other than my suppositions of his camaraderie with the Sadoul administration which would take precedence upon the contingency, then we will fall short in prospect, friend.

If one wishes to write more to this obtuse soul, then so be it. This diverges from melancholy so construe my words not by their sorrow but by their reparation which is all one of my like could wish to ask. My fiend spirit hasn't refrained just yet, friend; thus far, I have remained stubborn to fight for your dilemma be it that one is peeled of prudence amid it all. Nature sure has a bastion upon my spirits from which remit the vigorous heart of mine with but aught of venom. Farewell anew, dear friend and best of luck for the coming week. I know one can weather the cruel manners of the warden once and again!

SIXTH LETTER

Cédric to Leonard

Château de Rochefort, 28 October

My friend, the troubles I undergo mustn't be yours to be concerned of... my vanities are bitter to taste but treacly once your snout whiffs its tempers, but nonetheless I worry that it may be too great for one to hold upon for long, so, for the sake of thou, don't go deeper than what your foot has reached; the waters alow are seething and welcome a heart not of yours which of warms unsettled souls yet to savor tranquility.

My writing has been idle but without languor all the while I lie inert in my dim antechambers writing to you at the hour of nightfall merely not far from slumbering, but I insist nevertheless to continue my stubborn ways accompanied by the brash owls outside.... I have much to recount and can't bear further of letting it flee about my quivered mind unto bankrupt the mind of what sensibility previously held of. Oh Providence! if must, thou shall damn me howbeit my impulses will forever pervade the stimulating hearts of men who too want naught but the uttermost of libertinage sought forth; therefore, I consider myself as merely the apostate of Providence's designs and the benefactor of Nature's errors leading us, friend, to the fact that I forever damn virtue and decent men whom wish rectitude upon my spirits... damned if any such as a dolt hinder my course!

The afternoon hour of the 21st of October, I received a charitable letter from Alceste of details informing me of his findings yet again he left me despondent allowing not a man to feel a sense of sorrow be it Alceste sought not for such to befall yet nevertheless felt the need to do so... his tears were mine to hold, not his! I recieved your letter on the morning hour of the 23rd of October and all I can say is that I apprise what repentance you had despite these infelicitous events; moreover, friend, I nearly cried like a madman by the time I reached the end of your writing, but what lies upon is far greater than what words can depict... I surmise you've

already come to the same deduction... alas! lest it impedes, no need to have perturb upon it!

At the current hour, I have lots to tell but little of time to spare; the Duc ships his subordinates about the corridors whereto I fear of being caught and, no, I must undergo this indignation round the clock without even a meager sum of strife... the bastard utterly bereaves us of liberty in a trice where it illuminates itself.

Just yesterday afternoon, I was sent off to his chambers located not far away from the antechamber quarters where I was held; the rationale being he needed to speak of my case and the scheme he arranged for my stay:

The Duc Fourès: Greetings! Monsieur de Beaumont, I have much to discuss with you today about your case. Before I continue, I ask of thou merely a few questions: what is it that led you to such action and unto what was the intention of such action?

Cédric: Fuck! I've proclaimed this numerous times: no, I am not the one behind the Sadoul murder for heavens sake! An utter dolt such as yourself can only reach where his twigs can no longer extend unto and entertain the notion that they somehow know of one's plight and are not ignorant of it... yet, they never cease to charm my conceits as do thou; nonetheless, what asset would suffice anyways with thou?—Should one sincerely consider your foul poisons in any case?

The Duc Fourès: Dear heavens! Monsieur de Beaumont, why, by all means, do what one pleases whether be it a sin of my commandments or nowise;... ultimately, you will be reformed into what us, I and the Sadoul administration, wish upon thee even supposing one accosts it or not. I spot you writing perilously to your friends but what good will it do when it precedes one nowhere aside from mere chimera?

Cédric: Does one gravely suppose that I'm but a vassal to you and your whims? I'll be damned if I ever expend manners solely to titillate the likes of thou... you're an utter fool and mustn't I say again that thou squawks are yet more a vain motion by which lie bound by sheer nescience and unwillingness to prowl after anything higher than what your fists can pummel.

The Duc Fourès: Your feckless utterances suffice not in what thou solicits which of is the sensation of unconstraint from whatever fetters the spices that palpitate thou. Become versed in assent afore succeeding upon tyranny, dear friend, lest thou

wills to submit to misfortune... what will it be: live forever a dunce unknowing of a man governing thou to no end or live shortly a heroic fool knowing of his adversary yet unable to move much lest he urges to apprise death? That is all! go forth and end your senseless spite; write your heart out but do no more than what one can merely feel inclined to do!

Just thereafter, I was sent off to afternoon lunch—Bouillabaisse from Marseilles complimented by wispy Chablis—upon which Monsieur de Lacoste towed me to the table as to sit me next to the old man. I happened to find out his name, Charles, succeeding a warm welcoming of the other, and became acquainted with what he was here for, his passions, among other things; in spite of appearance, he is an amiable man with a surfeit of stories inside his whisking mind such that one could do naught but be mesmerized by what he recited.

I discussed with Charles his incentives for lying here to which he forthrightly unveiled the details throughout our repast. From my understanding, he was here for an act of treason for deserting his platoon in pursuit for a long lost suitor of his—a 20 year old man by the name of Louis, who was in a relationship with Charles when he, Charles, was shipped off to warfare—which felt he did a hardy loving for. Charles reached up to a Lieutenant-colonel during his time in the military yet his amour for Louis knew no bounds, and forthwith, Charles wound up fleeing his garrison in Paris as to clash with his lover whom, at the time, resided in Strasbourg.

Three days into the expedition, he was arrested, sentenced to life in prison, and was sent to Château de Monfort in Saint-Dizier where he spent 20 years in then was transferred to where I reside presently. Throughout his stay in Château de Monfort, he wrote prolifically to Louis, but it wasn't until three weeks thereafter he discovered the harrowing news that Louis killed himself which led him to a path of misfortune: he refused to eat his meals, spat at the guards, and spent most of his time in isolation.

The warden of Château de Monfort, Jean-Baptiste Clariond, grew distraught amid the last five years of Charles's residence when the President Sadoul threatened to cut funding of the establishment in favour of the impenetrable Château de Rochefort; Monsieur Clariond denounced such a measure for the sake of not dishonouring what little courtliness he had, yet the President proceeded with his

motion in such a way that Monsieur Clariond was to witness the President's tempting prowess clash its claws upon him just before his odium. Thenceforth, Charles was sent to Château de Rochefort on the assertion that he, Charles, orate not a word of repulse vis-à-vis the President's if he savors living... such was imperative for the President, and it was through this that Charles was able to tell me of what little knowledge we know of regarding the President's character which otherwise could be in nullity.

Our meals concluded, we were dispatched with the accompaniment of Monsieur de Lacoste and the other guards to a parish, at close quarters, upon a beautiful veldt located across a bridge from the establishment. The interior of the parish was bedecked immoderately: auric crosses, the soothing sound of sedative wind, and an entourage of seats arranged solely in the wind of our arrival; upon the entrance, two priests: Father Henri and Father Lothaire awaited then apprised our coming thereafter with warm gifts of reception. Charles and I stood next to the other in disillusion of these men... we knew their breath reeked and they hardly tied up their robes; among it all, their erections were still present even now and, from afar, one could facilely smell semen precisely like a hound... everything included, to us, they were mere dabblers in the artistry of libertinage and again we exchanged a comely colloquy once only we went to dinner thereafter.

The priests conversed with us once we took our seats and the guards stood next door to us; from there on, together they launched a sermon but, by surprise, we instead had more of a discourse on religion which, to my assumption, was no doubt what the Duc sought out for holding a sermon; Charles and I witnessed the likelihood to put our aptness to the test by daring with these men, yet it seemed we were but deficient in the studies of theology being that our lives never hinged on it so, in a sense, one could say we sprinted as blockheads into a trench of baneful propensities that yet we have to be acquainted with.

The two men commenced their dialogue straightaway the moment Charles and I took a breath once we sat upon our seats:

Father Henri: Gentlemen! I apprise what heartfelt strength you all have for attending this sermon, but don't be bothered of this being a formal rite... rather, mind it as merely a vigorous disquisition of what it means to have God in one's heart,

why notions of Christ need not to be corrupted, and the means one must achieve aforesaid prosperity where, in the act, not a soul is wounded by the agency of one's pursuits.

Father Lothaire: Indeed, gentlemen, as Father Henri told, one mustn't sway from Christ's heart... he adores us all and each of us need of life nigh as much as the other. I see vice in your hearts yet virtue in your souls... what must it suffice for one to shift the other way, to scorn the little virtue they have... what? just to give it all away to sweeten mere scoundrels without one's interests in mind? What freedom is that, tell me?

Cédric: My God! thou puts on a lovely show of utter stupidity for the fact that what can only enlighten your weak pieces of wisdom is by expounding notions of your breed rather than anatomizing the words us, libertines, say; trust me, friend, I've scrutinized your words dearly and to this very day, I have yet to come across one who isn't more or less quixotic in their reasoning when it comes to judging man's actions. Your absence of rigor lets your commonalty swallow, not unlike a gluttonous swine, your specious words as might be a compulsion to propitiate; what more shall I say before I can sight you, for once in your life, encountering misfortune and beseeching my succor?—I'll be damned if I ever need give to one like you in any manner!

Father Henri: I do recognize your fanatical yet sagacious ideals granted I deem them ones of a sinner whose humanity chooses not to leak from its shell. What emboldens me is your stubborn temperament that hardly ever is valued of; but thou see, friend, I am a far cry from what one calls a dolt! I admit, I too am brimmed with vice just as thou... maybe not to the extend of you, but I nevertheless know of its being; but what brings about contrariness among us is to what degree we employ them: I, for one, don't live a life of crime nor do I live a life of utter melancholy, but, thou divergently desires to fixate only on crime and spurn any compassion, sympathy, and empathy that puts forth itself.... Everything considered, thou are the one who resides in fantasy rather than whom you postulate does.

Charles: Thou dishonours yourself befittingly for a man who can simply flatter an idle conception yet do not to bend another man's ideals unto confutation. Nevermore, do your kind cease to stupefy me yet again of your outright idiocy... genuinely, do thou have any dignity? I suppose not in the least as can be seen of the

seldom instances thou prevails upon another in an exchange along these measures.

Father Lothaire: Very well indeed, gentlemen... I've seem to have forfeited all to my lord and savior just so I could scorn whatever wrong my mind sought; see! I confess my errors, I have beforehand, and fathom their capacity, but still you both incline to witness me become a singularity: one without a sense of being... one who is but bare material... one whose ideals only do him discourtesy, thus he is without his identity, provided that I remain stupidly benighted with my principles which you both shun. In all fairness, isn't that comparable to what the two of you profess to gripe?

Cédric: Hardly at all, friend! one conveys the impression that either you are indentured by your notions or you are drunk with your own opposition to give even a second thought to take in account how much thou have left to unearth; contrary to Father Henri, in some measure, you are willing to confess your errors and contradictions—I think highly of such modesty—yet at no time, do you discern what diverges us nor do you consider the fact that shunning inaccuracies is the foil of shunning veracity, whatever it may be. Reflect upon that in advance of prattling much the same as an imbecile; then, thou will witness a change in course of our but once demeaning discourse into, in all likelihood, a far more proper discussion.

They continued for a few more hours until the sun began to set in the corner; Monsieur de Lacoste spotted this and relayed to his guards that all of us must be shipped to the dinning quarters for our dinner meals; therefore, we went forth into the prison convoyed by Monsieur de Lacoste and the guards in the rear of bidding farewell to the two priests. The walk was an easing diversion succeeding the tempestuous discourse we had; Charles and I were taciturn throughout the journey harmonizing but only our eyes upon the other to comprehend what they were musing.

We arrived in the dinning quarters, Ludovic and the other chefs by that time had our suppers wholly prepared—simply salmon en papillote and subpar Picardy wine was what we were awarded—and Monsieur de Truong, by the side of Monsieur de Lacoste, chaperoned our repast without a slip. Charles and I began a new conversation that was yet to be experienced; on the whole, we were entranced from beginning to end on the topic of what makes one nothing in the eyes of Nature; I

won't go into details but I'll say that we put on a pleasing show for onlookers whom thirsted for philosophy like us; I seized stupefying bliss solely for witnessing my fellow man sanction what I itched to say for so long... a fondness for the damnable establishment burgeoned upon me in a manner never yet I considered.

The night befell upon us, thus, yet more, we needed to bid our wishes before we were shipped back to our antechambers for the night. Same as before, Monsieur de Truong walked both Charles and I to our antechambers as though he was rather enamored of us; surely, this troubled us not for we welcomed one more discussion with the sharp, young man purely for egotistical motives.

"Say," said Monsieur de Truong, "have any of you both heard word of what the Duc does shortly after all of you, the prisoners, slumber off?" "Not at all," said Charles and I in response. "Ah, see... the deviant fetches a group of prisoners from neighboring prisons, housing the adolescents, exclusively to have orgies which, per usual, consist distinctively of men between the ages of 18-20 and women between the same ages. I have yet to see a day where he does not abide by this habit and I doubt he'll ever sway from it," said Monsieur de Truong; "moreover, he has not the manners as to sanitize the unrelenting stench venting from his trousers... fuck! it damn well makes me ailing as all hell yet I get the feeling that I marvel at it without my knowing.... If that happens to be correct, what mustn't I drunken myself with so I can blossom further unto crime?" Charles and I paused for a short while until both we could compose a proper response; I therefore said: "Friend! in all sincerity, I note no impression of insensibility regarding your thoughts and, indeed, my manners would be of a madman's considering your supervisor treats his lackeys just as though they were merely insignificant to give mannerisms upon... what fanaticism must it be to know of that feeling and undergo it per diem with no sight of courtesy; to me, thou echoes what us, the prisoners, taste of routinely, so don't feel in such a way that one considers his troubles to be simply only his; by no means is such a notion remotely close to sensibility, rest on my words." By that time, we landed upon the entrance of our antechambers, so Charles and I told our partings to Monsieur de Truong then he sealed the door abaft of us.

I end here, friend, and say no more than what I said in this letter. The times we are in are virulent for all of us and as I lie here waiting for the moment the bastard whom runs this establishment is struck with a spirited bolt, thou yet more

gives not to servility and reads my letters with no prejudice... naught more can be venerated for than that. I shall rest stubborn and be damned if I am to lay down arms when hope, at that moment, is but idle considering my words will suffice not if I am to be the equivalent of a coward with scurvy tempers; alas, one will have to kill me where I stand if they couldn't do with my schism but I'll be damned if I permit such a measure to befall. Farewell! tell me more when time permits and we shall see the other soon!

SEVENTH LETTER

Leonard to Cédric

Marseilles, 30 October

Reading over your letter, nothing trickled but my tears considering what penance I have for myself, as was I who led you to your crime eventualizing one to be imprisoned, but, of all things, be imprisoned in said heartless prison steered by a man whom facilitates the one that compelled your imprisonment, hence he values thou merely as a patsy in his vicious game and nothing more; yet, I am to rest here, sanctioning him to enact all what his ascendancy can stipend him, and to catch sight of, without pretense, the utter sin he so willingly carries out... hell! it conceives madness within me!

I had a go at writing to Monsieur Blanchet in order to get recent details that he could perhaps have; unsuccessfully, he imparted me merely with the words that said he was still without substantial conclusions, though he declared that he had feasible ones. It was by this precipitous inquiry that I sensed comfort since a long while, but Monsieur Blanchet added that in spite of this, their accuracy has yet to be established for the fact that the Sadoul administration retains an unyielding handle around their intelligence making it practically insurmountable to consider seizing whatever word from them; and so, this is a festivity of nepotism and venality on the side of our adversary; in time, friend, we will need to one day waive this apostasy if it precipitates further misfortune, even supposing that it doesn't effect you... I have an adorable, young daughter whom would have her spirits damped by much if she discovered that her father departed from her life; friend! I would weep in hell everlastingly witnessing my hapless daughter journey in misfortune with not an action I can do to hand her guidance, so please have me understanding.

On behalf of my family, they are doing spectacularly despite the lessened moments I can have with them at present: Claudine seems to be bettering her vocabulary by the hour at such an absurd degree, and my wife is persistently tied

up with household chores placing dubious strain upon her... we are very much occupied by our projects.... Beyond a reasonable doubt, I myself am pained by the mess we conjointly drove ourselves in together with the hard fact that it was we who bred misfortune upon both us and our beloved people; not ever did they warrant these consequences especially from the likes of us. All I solicit is merely your consideration and not more with the purpose that we are knowing of the bottom line, which sights upon us and us only; of course, my friend, the bastards whom mislead us are what drew upon this misfortune, yet it is us who were fatuous enough as to suffer from their conspicuous artifice, and I know highly of our adroitness and so forth, don't portray the fool just as if you were honestly upright through the whole of it... clearly not!

Much hasn't engrossed me in recent times other than the letters you send me, the discussions I have with Monsieur Blanchet, and the time I spend with my wife and daughter; this lead to implacable lethargy all but pernicious for me, therefore I sought out a diversion and that was when I brought to light my new found passion: poetry. Thou knows, friend, of my enjoyment for literature so, putting my finesse to the test, I attempted poetry which incipiently demanded my whole concentration, but, in a wink, suddenly I comprehended its design and, so forth, I went at writing well over 20 in merely five hours; unfortunately, I haven't found the time to spare for you to see it in this letter, but I do reckon on an occasion mounting itself if only you are patient.

Ending this off, I'd hate to echo my words endlessly knowing thou is all in all conscious of my thoughts; in a sense, their energy would be diminished which opposes their point together with the fact that it testifies my apathy of the circumstance. I need not an additional burden at this time or then my spirit would have to lean to other, purportless ones which for a fact will wind up idle ambitions; I hold dear of you, friend, and so my afflictions are not ones I opt to impose upon you, hence, per this, my businesses, while taxing on me, do serve a purpose—they are to lend you a helping hand in these not bargained for times and bestow you with all prospect I am willing to compose—so all I necessitate here and now is simply your understanding not your gratitude for my letters! Farewell for the time being, my friend; I sigh for good fortune upon you just so you are able to get through the despairing days and I could feel as though I contributed to boosting your day.

My dear daughter wanted to bid you, in like manner, a fighting chance against these venomous entities be it they hold more wealth than us together with more jurisdiction, but be that it may, truthfully do I give a damn? We're all hopeful, friend, so please never lay off your boiling will... only then will thou come friends with melancholy and fritter their genius elsewhere as it were valueless... it's evident that it demands consideration, so, to end, not on your life, grow into a coward or else I shall meet your dastardly self in person and shine all but I can upon it to damn it to where it once nested all the while the worst of manners will be bulged throughout the confrontation without remission!

EIGHTH LETTER

Alceste to Cédric

Paris, 6 November

Again! I send you a letter! Apologies for a late one, your friend beyond doubt shrieks me of the fact I strung my so called embers with ideations aiming for idle pursuit in one's impenetrable case merely for the sake of taking comfort in diverging against this madness, but yet my mind is steered to fiction and actuality, throughout, could be considered if not for deserving its much needed honour. Succor, despite still meager, manifested like a passionate leaf unto our hell just when my stubborn efforts in writing to the Sadoul administration lead me to receive a letter in the post yesterday morning from upon which, I found out his name to be Monsieur de Saint-Laurent. By the minute I read the letter thoroughly, more light was shed upon our enigma as if the water of the Holy Grail touched our frail lips:

Dear Monsieur Blanchet,

Yes, your fangs of venomous irascibility show to me the deep concerns one has of what happened to befall on not only you but to us; I and neither of us in the Sadoul administration have any sort of motive as to pour further toxins upon your already grieving wounds nor are we scheming unbeknownst motions... lets have clear of that before I continue this letter.

Struggle is within, ingrained heavily in, our companies considering this troubling circumstance which deems us the mere puppets of what gambits shall come by its tyrants. Like a madman, I furiously write this to you much for the fact of disorder running throughout my mind

all the while my voice is kept silenced by the dictation of my repressive supervisors; now, they toil us ceaselessly unto absolute prostration so their fulfillment of what this disorder births upon us is collected for their sake and ours is neglected in the process. Monsieur Blanchet, if you want one to point your brutish fingers at, do all your worst that one's mind can conceive at those group of reprobates; I reckon highly of the possibility that all fingers point at them for your misfortunes, but my suppositions are as accurate as one's own, thus take it or leave it to your pleasing.

Before I end off this letter, a transpiration of telling you about the bastard came to me just now which made me feel the need to address it to one like you considering the fact it may enlighten the somber and nihilistic bulbs within your mind. I, myself, was employed as Sadoul's secretary, but now, I serve as a record archivist of his political files among others; consider me a fairly versed man in Sadoul's background, but unfortunately, contrary to your wishful prospects, I am under no authority to discuss the details being I'm still a hound on a leash, thus I am only and only willing to expose overheard conversations and delineating, with mere adjectives, a rough description of his background so thou can picture him in the manner one needs to picture him in for the sake of your dear friend's liberty.

An utter scoundrel he was! Such indecency he paraded without a damn; he had ludicrous faith in that his repellent habits somehow harvested appraisals which no doubt riled me up to boiling temperatures as did it for everyone whether they conceded it or not, but those dunces, in many instances, wished to be the President's servant for better payment. I distinctly recall the time he boasted, like an oaf, of his success, yet was in reality ours, of depriving a poor Yemen village, Benincasa, from its resources when we, France, secured control over their entire residency. It led our economy to greater heights yet the blockhead, with all of his dimensionless characteristics, felt mere pride as if he

was the one who even participated to begin with... how comical!

Not even by his appearance is he charismatic: viciously sinuous teeth, unsightly breath, and draped eyelids all could be remembered of the man's repulsive physique... yes, I do still to this day shutter at the image. Most occasions, the cunts of feculent prostitutes were what his head burrowed in, so not many of us witnessed to see his hideousness to our good.

Oh, did I forget his godawful rituals even a child won't mirror? Ten prostitutes before breakfast time, twenty after, ten the hour before lunch, five the hour after, and it goes on... heavens! does he ever call it a day? On top of that, he counted his bountiful capital until he napped for the evening which lasted until dinner time. His well-paid valet, Artus, supplied him the meals after his adventures throughout the day. God! he was infantile in his routine it drove my peers and myself to utter madness, but what say we have when the bastard is in the chair making us, his administration, cosset his damnable motions at every hour whereas he lies in his lavish castle, Château Sadoul in Alès, fucking the entire populace of beautiful but tremendously debauched men and women in a city, village, town,... you name it! Heavens! it was madness and we all were to sup in such madness... in all seriousness, does one honestly expect that?... Is one bound to lick the paws of an oaf who can't even shut his damn mouth when it needs to be shut? That, Monsieur Blanchet, led me to the madness I am good friends with today, and now I am knowing of what a dolt he was.

What was said here was to be said here; consider this a monumental step into helping Monsieur de Beaumont be free of our rule. If all you think is merely this letter left nothing for you, I suggest for you to accept the facts I expound and move on! From start to finish, I gave off subtle clues to the best a man in my position can and very well, I can throw this letter way and wish it nothing but to be lost

without a reader... do thou really want that? Write back to me if you wish, I have no company to write to these days and really welcome the conversations we could potentially have, Monsieur Blanchet. That is all! farewell and good fortune for all of the sake of seeing that excuse for a man, Sadoul, have his image burned to nullity, so no luring soul crosses path with his frail yet rotten poisons ever again!

Sincerely, Monsieur de Saint-Laurent

I've read it all, Monsieur de Beaumont, and have given all I can for this moment; the letter from dear Monsieur de Saint-Laurent shall guide us further unto understanding be it at the cost of everything; thou is knowing of that fact by now. Like I said previously, I have many clients I must attend to yet yours is the most striking of them all as if it was a golden flower among gray ones, therefore see to it that I will deliver hell upon Sadoul's collective of idiots and will leave nothing but the utter ashes of Sadoul's corpse left of that body of bastards! Once more, farewell! Stay safe and wait, Monsieur de Beaumont, for my advent of sheer war against those scoundrels that, to the day I die, Christ, God, Mohammad, and whatever holy will punish me to the worst domains in hell for my impassioned sins I have yet to commit!

NINTH LETTER

Leonard to Cédric

Marseilles, 6 November

Our paths are connected and you know it, dear friend! This has no relation to your alarming case but it very well has much needed sentimental value that, from my heart, I felt the need to impart upon to you; if you don't want to shed tears with me, then throw away this piece of parchment and I will not change and, yes, I will now and forever agitate your bad-tempered state unto content whether a mind such as yours, relentless and glacial, invites it or not! Yes, my friend, I see you've everlastingly retained a bad-temper and I do too! but what will it do for us in these times? Thou can't simply have twenty orgies a day and, me, I can't simply commit countless acts of incest with my mother in Lyon, so tell me, friend, with the brilliance of your mind, why does it flee so promptly to indulgence?... Alas, another telling of my past, like our times in Nantes in the summer of 1740, shall suffice for this current letter, considering my wife and daughter have been the same since last time and Monsieur Blanchet hasn't written to me just yet.

THE STORY OF LEONARD

For old time's sake, I'll discuss the same events we were discussing in the summer of 1740 in Nantes. I count upon your hearing all through the letter otherwise these will be but dampened words without their syrupy matter coating them. I'll be as unequivocal as I can with my telling: the year of 1709 in Lyon, I was born consequently from a mishandled abortion at the hands of my mother—Sophie, formerly Sophie Senechal—and the opprobrious, wealthy politician you already know of: the President Sadoul, the father of the now deceased Sadoul that led to your imprisonment; the two of them took up the responsibility to rear me for the fact that my so called father who dripped his semen into my mother disappeared without

a trace thus Sadoul took that position; however Sadoul, from my mother's words, routinely brought over prostitutes mostly around the adolescent ages and minded not of proclaiming the moments he discharged. He was slovenly, ill-mannered, idiotic, and, above all, cowardly! Every trait he had was ignominious but he adored flouncing them like they were something to marvel at.

My mother was employed as a prostitute and was regularly beaten quite cruelly, most of the time, by the patrolling officers and, when the hour permitted, was heaved around like rope by a dozen men intending to penetrate all holes she had. My mother was much acquainted with the realities of this world after undergoing a ten man orgy, with the inclusion of her mother, arranged solely by her father annually from age 18 to 23; by then, she was sent off on the streets without anything other than her body; one could say that was the only trait her parents admired, considering her father had orgies with prostitutes and her mother harvested infant organs and sold them to the English; to her, she was just fatty flesh prepared for the leery beasts to prey upon and seize her for god knows how long.

There came a time, when I was 8, when I was enlightened of debauchery immediately upon when I witnessed Sadoul sodomizing and delicately asphyxiating the neck of a soon-to-be male whore, age 20, and then discharging into his small yet effervescent mouth. "Oh you!," he cried, "the utter corruption of my soul wishes to share its dirt unto a soul fettered by notions of virginity, virtue, righteousness, all that separates thou from ever even caressing the topmost thorns upon the roses of Nature, but yet all one sees through their constricted lenses is what comforts them enough. I witnessed this horror and rather than scorn, I sought teaching you of this fine art, and see what happened... thou is now brewing with pleasure never before palpated! Need not you the fantasies of Christ, of despotic systems, of any that intend hindrance and moderation, and most of all, dear boy, oppose the notion of that one must and shall act as what another wishes one to be as such just so their senseless contradictions can thrive."

Sadoul left us, my mother and I, when I was 14 to a residency I yet to know of to this day, but from how the bastard left without a farewell, with his trousers half buttoned, and his teeth rotten as the sewers, one knows well of his perverted schemes. Once 16, I heard news of his death, from the papers, and nodded it off nonchalantly as if I heard word of a flea's deceasing that day. Now and forever, no

less of a damn from me can be given of the scoundrel, and now knowing he was responsible for birthing the one who imprisoned you, nevermore can my blistering tempers desist with it imprinted in my mind!

My mother ended up rearing me up until I was 24, and that's when I secured employment as an officer for a several years in Marseilles until the autumn of 1739. Our fateful encounter transpired a few months after, on the 16 August 1733, having the profession, and yes, my friend, a mind surely like mind will never fail to remember it: you were in vain times with the unforeseen destruction of your family's graceful château and precipitous transition from your time in the military, but me, I stood atop misfortune and had my days simmering with benevolence which, must I say, left me with utter chimera as if I was to forever live in this self-conceived utopia of mine; oh yes! it was thou, dear friend, that beckoned me the other way and, even if it left me agitated in that moment, still do I deeply honour your courtly offering.

It was the night hour and so, I spent the night hour, me alone, overseeing the ports with knowing of recent ship piracy in reach of Marseilles. The orders from my head officer instructed us to throw out any vagrants hibernating on the ships, and to arrest them on sight if they are noted of doing so more than once. Prior to this night, four days ago, a pregnant mother, who presented the eye with but a skeleton as her physique, was found on a ship, in the nightly hour, sleeping soundly, but she was familiar to us and so, it was I who asserted the partaking of arresting her; oh, must I say, she was a seditious woman: my hand was bitten to pieces worse than what any animal's fangs could do upon me, two other officers had to assist me, and she shrieked similar profanities Sadoul announced when in the process of discharging. Eventually, I took hold of my sword and slit her throat viciously with flying colors and no, I was in no manner punished for my action but rather went to receive melodious flatters for what, to them, was deemed virtuously... ah! now do I shun such a label!

By the midnight hour, I heard a distant holler of sheer emotion and unfading passion together with the sour odor of fire burning tingling my snout offensively prompting me a sensation of titillation unlike the one I feel as an officer. A heard a voice from a man who hollered: "The embers by which burn at this very hour, dear friends, set upon us how truthfully tenuous the branches of virtue are considering

we can smolder her sullied leaves without a no from her mouth, yet we see upon us that crime is unyielding and continues Nature's motions with not a trouble lest the fallacies of virtue continue to spew their poisons. Therefore, I see no other manner to do virtue dishonour than as to spectate and partake in burning these Bibles, crosses, Virgin Mary statues, and all other fictitious material defecated out from herself!"

I went further, I made sight of three men sitting on a ship, just west of where I was stationed, holding with them what they announced they had, sitting jointly around an incensed fire; one of them was you and I found it was thou who hollered earlier, and the other two looked wealthy considering their attire: one was draped head to toe in a golden robe with beside him a black, wooden cane, and the other wore a sumptuous pourpoint with a noticeable aiguillette and clean, black pompadours. When I began coming into view, the two men continued at throwing the religious material into the flaming embers, but you, my friend, you stood their with not fright, not choler, but rather, you stood with intrepidity just as though one renounced fleeting concerns in prospect of what was to come hereafter.

"Oh, who must you be, Monsieur, a man bound by his self-deemed lawful fancies, thinking that what we were doing was to be troubling? Alas," say thou, "I can smell your horrid aroma from just here! The utter deceits fleeing about your mind, must I say, will gracefully welcome you misfortune, and shalt you fear for it, your harassing errors forever be judged upon the courts of man's synthetic designs."

I couldn't utter a word; no, I couldn't bear to shift from my position for the life of me! My sword still holstered, what only I could believe was the certainty of a forthcoming insurgency of my notions against yours with there to be blood shed all through and yes, in all certainty, friendships could be established that day, but at that time, I scorned the sparkling conjecture to all unto my mind felt purged of such momentary fantasy.

"What's your story, Monsieur? I see upon my eyes a man greatly studious in the crafts of upholding a righteous society overrun, nearly enough to be greedy in tyranny, in virtue, and the emotions!," cried thou. "All one can witness is but a man who shouts out what his imposers design in such a manner that stupidity over sensibility professedly makes any sense. No, I don't think you're an idiot, far

from it! but what I do witness is an adroit man tethered to a leash by dolts whose judgment suffices well-nigh to vermins with none other to espouse than merely their prejudiced chimeras."

"I view myself in a contrary manner, you see: I live in contradiction, yes, but what gives when comfort, a condition libertines expound without equivocation, is gained by this undiluted conduct I so incline for? Be that as it may, no, I am no man of Christ nor a man of any religion," responded I. "Consider this: you live with wealth and always were fed with a silver spoon knowing not of what the common populace undergoes hourly, but yet your aristocratic background has pointed and showed the way to much what the common man has, thus far, not heard nor seen of. I won't scream like a child and consider your knowledge under my own because I realize, full well, such is but ignorant which only simpletons, by the utilization of their prejudiced logic: faith, would reckon with. Therefore, we are knowing of the others errors, where their hearts sincerely lie, and, too, of their obdurate souls."

"Oh my of all spoken!," cried thou, "to be fated of finding ourselves friends at this hour do I, in due time, see upon me velvety colors instead of foreseen irascible disturbance as among the various backbones of what call shalt thou one's modesty. This day, shall I consider you my beloved friend seeing that man have not need of your anomalous idiosyncrasies, yet I, at no time, sight men not far from thou and this intensely displeases me. My two others that joined the ceremony today will be no more appraised as my best of friends with your company here with us—" I assert staunchly thereafter: "What leads thou to suppose that I bother with your crimes? Do you honestly expect not me to plunder your activities and do what my heart wishes, that is... to suspend your sin? I dare not say you evidently view me as but a fool with seldom acuity, and mustn't I deceive and judge myself to be a cut above you." Thou said after a pause: "What more uttered is all the more pernicious to the little pride have left within you, and yet you seem knowing of that and still continue as might be the only weapon left in one's reserve. With all considered, yes, my perverse soul thirsts for more other than mockery: it sights connection, and so forth, upon this sensation, shalt thou and I be evermore sharing of our misfortunes and triumphs; the hour of crime has come upon us, my friend, and what better way to honour that than to arouse our impliable errors and remain allies!"

From the 1720s to 1733, you had no home due from the destruction of your family château and lived on vacant ships collecting capital through odd jobs around Marseilles, but succeeding our nighttime brush, days were spent at my middle order residence by the riverside. We spent our nights sipping ritzy Burgundy wine which became all too familiar and no doubt did it forever leave its taste imprinted in our mouths. Your scandalous other friends wished to move in with us, but I declined such advancement considering the fact was for your lack of manners the two of them had: one brought over the most disgusting prostitutes Marseilles produced, and the other masturbated frequently with no sense of privacy... I was in everlasting disgust by the lack thereof, and so, I sent them off without even a farewell, but you seemed oddly cheerful of how I handled it.

I began scorning my job as an officer for sought I did of a less disordered employment. To add on, the head of the department prevailed the notion that I am to surrender upon him nigh the districts of despotism. The irascibility led my brilliance, as you may know, into harvesting all capital I could for my ultimate act: opening a tavern in the outskirts of this port city... all scents that shamelessly displayed themselves were unpleasant, old, and reeked of what I suppose one may call the beastly caprices of utter savages. Who gave a damn if I gave no further corruption to these ignominious parties?

I was surely a daring man! I erected, pridefully, my sought out tavern for which beyond reason led me a path of non-inviting thorns, and my! days and hours were non-existent inside my royal manor. These, out of my will, were instead rewarded by me tending to the needs of nearly every last one of my patrons, far from what one may deem not unlike the prowling vagrants in the area, whom sought my noble reception. This all gave me tears of bursting love in which I certainly welcomed unto mending the spirits I formerly had. Say, I must! it was one of life's distinguished graces have not we ever valued at one time.

A few years went by, I amassed such graceful spirits of not a revolting appearance in and out of any; in spite of this newly built life of mine, my fantasies burgeoned viciously once again in not a sparing fashion. I renounced the fluctuation and continued on in my merry spirits such that I repel the poisons... my system was abiding and hinted at no further delinquency up to the years before this inconvenient forethought have unto me the slightest ounce of disorder, but with

all considered, a life of happiness is ridiculously idiotic to even suppose. Friend, I sensed the horrors I've yet to sight, and yes! I yelled violently as would you, but my cowardice, the representation of my failings, held my hand and shoved me into the vigorous embers making sure I am but merely figments of flesh and broken bones; very well, you could say that is what separates us and I won't be opposed to such a notion.

Precisely in the winter months of 1734, one could say these very months inspired great misfortune coaxed with truths, a man, who went by Monsieur Affré, soon frequented my prosperous tavern enjoying my kind reception alongside the beverages I gifted. He was average height, non-threatening, had brazen eyes, and a sense of welcoming cleanliness which most certainly differed from the usual patrons I received. To me, he posed no threat and I sensed no such presence of vulnerability on my part whilst the tavern carried on with its continuation, but he presented me an odd aroma of uncertainty what he was capable of... he had to be hiding something. I remember very well the evening of 18 December 1734: he was intending to drunken himself with the two friends—Monsieur Delecour and Monsieur Renaudin—he brought with him. Both of them wore long green coats, bore luscious cuffs, and well shined black shoes. It wasn't long when the hour hit that each had roughly up to eight glasses of red wine.

"What is your name?," asked Monsieur Affré. Promptly, I uttered back: "Oh, it's Leonard, Leonard de Verley." "Ah," responded Monsieur Affré, "what a nice name to have. My friends and I wanted to say that your business has been all the more courteous, and if not was it for in my ethics, I say you'd be bare of giving this establishment prosperity and its due honour for you, but yet I see a man, that is you, building a wall around himself... you're hiding something that is. So, Monsieur de Verley, why birth this place to begin with?"

"My other trade," responded I, "my other trade was run by unprincipled scoundrels without a second thought to their doings, and to me, what more could I give those poisonous fools than utter scorn which knew no limits, knew the fashions of defiance, knew how to chastise these serpents... what all may call that like of a delinquent child. For one, I perceived the world to be not in an image I sought for: the worst, most inane of men were the judges of Providence's orders and, as known by me, Providence is an enemy you shalt never consider to swindle

lest rather you just sin and befriend the lovely scents of Nature. See, why seek such employment if only it gives rise to not only tyranny but also contradiction? This tavern is my home in the sense that it births me passion, motivation, spirit... all can see these as strengths." I ended my speech, the three so called gentlemen withdrew from the conversation no doubt with ravenous ferocity frightening nearly every patron present in the tavern, almost like a foul event would come upon before long.

The lasting hours that night, I cleaned up the messes accumulated from the day and began closing down; however, before I could post the closed sign up, I heard, nearly just a few meters from me, howling from what seemed to be of three men, and so, my ignorance constructed me an alarming path and beguiled the spirits I so had at the moment. One of them, who sounded eerily familiar, proclaimed to his lackeys: "Friends! at last, at long last, the bastard is in his establishment far away from us, and no person in this district is walking about the streets at this hour... even the streetwalkers won't stop us and neither will they give a damn. That man, Leonard, is an utter disgrace who can only deliver unto me a barrage of loathsome venom for what he immodestly did to not only cause me indignities but strip me of a family and others of that luxury too. I say, dear friends, he has done the same to you, and so, I shall throw upon his establishment, he so built to strengthen himself, a storm of vicious embers which water could not even duel. Alas we go forth now, gentlemen!"

I heard it all and before I could hinder their course, the friends brayed out their intents and furiously threw kindled materials in various directions aimed directed at the heart of my tavern. All I could do was watch in sheer horror of what these bastards were achieving: they rejoiced, they drunk, they walloped in their crimes. Once all the walls were charred, they clashed with the heart of the tavern with their smoldering materials whilst I cowered such like my once prevailing tenacity was no more and utterly useless; oh! why need this be my doing? A half hour after, the three men stopped sighting the fact of that the tavern plus my heart were thoroughly obliterated to feebleness, and so forth, the friends walked away with simpers upon their faces, whereas I was in muffled tears having seen just how effortless it is to be stripped of felicity... now I know of it's astucious essence thereon.

My mother in Lyon took me in once I began sending to her desperate letters of need to thrive seeing from the fact that my old nest was now deteriorated. She

was in poor health and needed someone to tend to her needs in her cruel moments where blissful light could not be sighted, and I knew very well of such cruelty which not only spawned further empathy from my roiled heart but crafted care in its finest for my poor dear mother: I watched her all through the days, kissed her fiendish pains away, brayed to her devoutly warm words which could set her to tears on every evening hour, and set her to sleep with sentimental memories all the more benevolent. Everyday, I repeated and abode by this ritual for her sake shedding tears from both parties whilst injecting the beginnings of an all new activity which would forever shift our feelings to the pinnacle of which could be sought... she and I defied not it!

The monumental day of 18 September 1735, she uttered rightly to me: "My love, my sweet Leonard, everyday do you enliven the austere horizons which corrupt my very soul and not do you ever consider leaving me astray to do so myself; moreover, a sight of lust not sullied with idiotic notions I so never taught you is indeed present consistently within you, so to suppose you don't give me life is a crime I would and mustn't wish upon myself to achieve! The enigma we've never shun light upon is simply our passionate love in spite of our damaging perspectives of what we consider the other to be, and no, no I will not renounce our dear love whether it thirsts corruption or not; we are family, yes, but incest is only but the inclinations needed by Nature to continue her motions... such dishonour, I despise it dearly!"

We kissed passionately, rung our eardrums with reciprocal moans, strung our prejudices unto suffocation and decease... we paid no mind to them. I affixed her limbs to the bed with rope and desisted not with passionately sodomizing her and allowing her menstruation blood flood atop my prick as if a torrent of water flooded the streets in such an impudent fashion. "Oh," I shouted, "the lovely colour red consistently rises arousal within my vigorous blood that is spilled by the beckoning we let loose through cruel measures only among us, we can so achieve!" My mother heard the words and rather than let them pass with not a say, she, in spite of the words foretold, kindly regarded my words with the words: "My son, as if I would ever scorn you in any manner! That way of thinking is utterly absurd and thereon, I expect you to consider otherwise of your mother's listening. Cry until tears are spilled, if you must, of what you may deem your passion for an old soul such as

mine; speak of all heresy whereof the mind leaps unto; but, never let your affecting heart be used by others who will only care to experience the comforts and luxuries it can give to them when used to their benefit. Do that and I reckon your dear friend you've told me so much about, Monsieur de Beaumont, will appreciate your presence more than if not you let your emotions loose; however, to me, dear son, you can let them loose with me and unto me without fear of them loosing their strength!"

Her words! they aroused me whereto my prick knew no other fashion of decency than as to eject its vicious floods upon my mother's now flushed physique, and without doubt, I prided myself with such achievement as to cry with blithe tears—she was the sight I could never let myself be stripped of... a tragedy of which could have happened would be my emotions dictating my prowess. By her side, I took rest upon the bed—now silent of primal brays—and shut my eyelids whilst I heard her words: "Bravo! your emotions were the tools to your tremendous passion and yet a soul like me whose cunt is but a battleground of very unworthy men, and now with your stance upon it, such would be a disgrace to renounce passion's respective honour." "With all my very heart, I agree," I said. "I pity the men who thought otherwise of your sublime body; a man with his lasting breath would go to all lengths as to compliment such beauty; and so, we see that our fluids are militated for what our passions wish for such, in our case, my emotions are numbed unto just merely the feelings of lust and avarice set for our crimes." We slept for the rest of the afternoon and had supper just before we set forth again yet another ceremony with which a slight error in the hunger of our appetites would lead us to withdrawal all our missions in a later time; therefore, we kept our meals brief and our crimes nearly perpetual throughout the autumn and winter months of 1735.

How was it? A treat for your foul times is deserved, and my daughter and her mother are in Lyon currently meeting my mother whilst I write you this letter, so my mind has little to pay mind to on this hour. This perpetual disorder never bothers to send me courtesy, and the Sadoul administration is as ruthless as the scoundrels who burned down my tavern; with all considered, I'm deeply troubled and see no promising light as does, most certainly, the ambitious man Monsieur Blanchet is; but rather, I see Monsieur Blanchet helping you more than my emotional letters

could ever wish to do, so consider your options and side greater with the one who will surely crack the enigma in a matter of time. I see these toxins, you see these toxins, Monsieur Blanchet sees these toxins, and together a synergy of our spirits is the foundation of what will breed you further liberty; thus, my friend, don't let a dolt such as the Duc run your mind and corrupt it to fit his image of what one ought to be; surely, he should know by now that he is an utter stain on the floor with no more use to climb ahead than what a snail can muster, and as he attempts, we birth greater scorn of his pitiful existence. Farewell once more Cédric, make your abominable and horrid world all the less cruel the best you can not for my sake, no, not for my sake at all! but for your dear sake. Stay by that, continue speaking with you newfound friend, and stray from mephitic blockheads which give not to you but only take from you.

TENTH LETTER

Cédric to Leonard

Château de Rochefort, 11 November

Your shame is not to feel burdened of, dearest; as ever, the sun's rays do no justice of exposing your pain to your closest of allies and I weep, but forever do you have the attention of me in spite of my troubling conditions. I told my new friend, Charles, a great deal about you and as expected, he had only but compliments to expend—your state is not what you're making of it at this hour and letting it engulf your tenacity will only lead to unprecedented misfortune. Your past does bring me entertainment even amid these cold hours as would a flame from your heart; and I never approve of forestalling such.

This letter won't be long and I intend it to send a brief but powerful message which should ideally be relayed to none other than my lawyer; yes, I don't trust an emotional soul to employ an ounce of my conjecture in freeing me; daresay, my lawyer may be the only person who can no doubt sneak his way into this conspiracy; but, never suppose I have no need for your services, friend—you are suited in easing the pain I bear through these days; Charles in no manner brews such because he too is astray from hope thus he is the man who gives to me the pains truth holds.

Since your last letter, I've come to learn more of the Duc as well as my friend Charles. In the afternoon hour of the 7th of November, the Duc called for my summoning to his office with a guest whom was none other than Charles who looked as would I in hearing what the Duc was to say. The man stepped from his chair and circled about the room slowly with preposterous patient and said to us: "Good afternoon both of you! What was the point in my summoning? Was it to brim your mind with my meager speculations? Was it for an interest we share? Both would be correct but more so, I emphasize the latter—I have witnessed you curious creatures exchanging together the same thirst I engulf with which unequivocally

entices our passionate mindsets to spill from us through such burning means; must I say, both of you are the few who award me with brazing interest. Alas, you two, wish to continue our conversation presently or for another occasion? But forewarning, my interest fiends and I will continue summoning you two until surrendering is presented onto both of your visages, understood?"

Charles and I looked at the other with a congruent face and so, I responded back to the lucid man: "Fair enough, we concede to exchanging thereof in which way you see suited, but what is it in particular that you aspire to direct attention onto? Religion? Government? The fallacies of man?—" "I want us to dive into the depths of government and why you say? I'm willing to reveal sought after information explicitly aimed for your mind to smite it of whatever ignorance was once held, Monsieur Beaumont; as for you Charles, value his commentary through it all and learn more of your dear friend's history like he did so for you."

"See Monsieur Beaumont," the Duc said, "what lies before your quest to release your binds is misfortunes which will certainly rebound onto your friend's and lawyer if not accounted for."